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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/155,740	02/27/1998	DEBORAH ANN LEWIS	0885/0D930	9069

7590

06/26/2003

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EXAMINER

PRATT, HELEN F

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1761

DATE MAILED: 06/26/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/155,740

Applicant(s)

LEWIS ET AL.

Examiner

Helen F. Pratt

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 May 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reznik in view of the prior art and GB 1004522 and GB 1228175 (from Applicants' PCT) and Hsieh et al.

The claims are rejected for the reasons of record cited in the last office action.

Applicants argue that Reznik teaches away from the invention because Reznik fissures the skin of dates to enable air to be drawn rapidly out of the fruit to allow ready vacuum impregnation with water. Applicants argue that two phrases are used to increase the moisture content of the dates, a vacuum treatment and a fissuring of the skin of the dates. However, the reference discloses first fissuring the skin of the dates and then treating with water (col. 2, lines 25—34). The water can contain other ingredients, which will protect the fruit from spoiling. Certainly, treating with a sugar solution as in GB1,228,175 will keep the fruit from spoiling.

Applicants argue that vacuum impregnation of water into the fruit is a different process than that claimed as explained by the Reid Declaration. However, claim 1 requires "reacting the fruit with a solute solution containing one or more water activity controlling solutes for a time sufficient to allow solute infusion into the fruit....". This

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part of the claim says nothing about how the fruit is impregnated and does not exclude vacuum hydration, which efficiently draws water into the fruit. The Reid Declaration states that the Reznik patents purpose is rehydration and is not to enhancing eating quality under low moisture conditions (page 4, section 9). However, claim 1 does not require any particular moisture conditions. In addition, it is combined with other references that disclose that it is known to add solutes to make a low moisture food such as British patent 1,228,175. As to the desirability of microstability in section 10 of the Reid Declaration, microstability is not part of claim 1. In addition, no limitation is seen in claim one as to the rate of incorporation of the humectant. As a side note, the reference to "the Byron claim" as in sections 2 and 10 and throughout the Declaration is not understood as the instant inventor's are the Lewis's.

As to the rates of incorporation of the humectant, no limitations are seen in the independent claim, but are seen in two dependent claims and no showing has presented that a rate as claimed would not be present in the combined references.

Applicants argue that infusion and vacuum impregnation are very different processes. This is not seen as both processes allow for liquids to be absorbed by the fruit and nothing has been shown that a different product would have been produced using vacuum impregnation.

The reference to Steinwald has been removed as to not being to the treatment of a dried fruit as pointed out by the Reid Declaration.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Helen F. Pratt whose telephone number is 703-308-1978. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday from 9:30 to 6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Milton Cano, can be reached on (703) 308-3959. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-305-7718.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0651.

Hp 6-24-03


HELEN PRATT
PRIMARY EXAMINER